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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SAN SALVADOR 002680

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SMIG](#) [ASEC](#) [KFRD](#) [ES](#) [ACCELERATED](#) [DEPORTATION](#)

SUBJECT: INCENTIVES FOR GOES COOPERATION AND REGIONAL
LEADERSHIP ON ACCELERATED DEPORTATIONS ISSUE

REF: A. STATE 176485

1B. SAN SALVADOR 2657

Classified By: Ambassador H. Douglas Barclay. Reasons: 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Officials at the highest levels of the Government of El Salvador have, thus far, responded positively (ref. b) to Post demarche on DHS's Secure Border Initiative (SBI), and seem to fully grasp the fact that the USG intends to move very quickly to implement an accelerated deportations program. Furthermore, during DCM's September 23 call on Minister of Government Rene Figueroa, Private Secretary to the Presidency Elmer Charlaix, and Presidential Communications Secretary Julio Rank, all of whom constitute Saca's "inner circle," all three acknowledged that accelerated deportations are imminent, and that the question for them now becomes how to manage its political and fiscal impact here.

12. (C) At one point, Rank wondered out loud whether the GOES should not take a "leadership" role among its neighbors on this issue, and implied that whichever country gets to the "front of the line" to cooperate with the USG could well receive more benefits for its cooperation. At one point in the meeting, Figueroa described the fiscal impact of increased deportations on a number of government entities, such as airport operations, the immigration service, and law enforcement. Figueroa was especially concerned about accelerated deportations of hardened criminals, including gang members ("maras"), at a time of alarming increases in violent crime. In this regard, he specifically raised two major points: the GOES desire to re-start negotiations on a bilateral prisoner exchange agreement, and the need to build a second maximum security prison (which he estimated would cost USD 7 million) to hold the most dangerous deportees.

13. (C) At the end of the meeting, it was agreed that high-ranking GOES officials and key post country team members would constitute a working group to begin addressing the SBI issue. We expect that, at these meetings, the GOES will come prepared with a laundry list of needs to address the fiscal impact of the deportations on GOES institutions. There is little doubt that SBI will place a major burden on San Salvador airport operations and the ability of Salvadoran immigration to process the dramatic increases in "normal" returnees. There is also likely to be a significant burden on the Salvadoran national police and the penal system caused by an increase in criminal deportees. In anticipation of what will undoubtedly be a call for financial assistance from the GOES, Post has come up with the following list of possible incentives for the GOES, which will also be of concrete benefit to the USG as we seek to ensure that Salvadorans deported from the U.S. do not return.

Bilateral Agreements:

-- Accelerated negotiations on a bilateral prisoner exchange agreement based on the U.S.-Mexico model.

--Accelerated negotiations on a bilateral extradition treaty.

Use of DHS Processing Fees:

-- Finance construction of a GOES penal facility.

--Establish a national jobs and vocational training center.

DHS non-financial support to GOES consulates for deportee processing:

--Provide office space and administrative equipment to GOES consular officers at a central detention center, to facilitate issuance of travel document.

--Commitment to send a hard copy file of each criminal deportee's history upon the deportee's arrival in El Salvador, in addition to diplomatic notification.

Use of Post INL funds:

-- Provide a modest amount of funds under INL's country port security program to purchase computer and other necessary equipment to process increased deportee flow through El Salvador International airport.

--Request additional INL assistance to purchase biometric fingerprint scanners at the El Salvador International airport, other immigration offices, and Salvadoran National Police (PNC) offices so that all incoming criminal deportees could be fingerprinted upon arrival;

14. (C) Comment: President Saca and the GOES pride themselves on the "special relationship" they enjoy with President Bush and the USG, and point to their support on Iraq, CAFTA, and a whole range of multilateral and regional issues as clear examples of their commitment to this relationship. Much like his decision to send troops to Iraq, support of SBI could be a domestic political liability to President Saca. In this regard, we must think creatively about ways to give Saca political cover to take a regional leadership role in supporting accelerated deportations, such as the signing of extradition and prisoner exchange agreements, while using whatever funding is available to us to ameliorate the burden of deportations on GOES institutions. Post would welcome Department reaction to the use of these possible incentives, as well as identification of any additional incentives, financial or otherwise.
Butler